

## RISE OF SENATOR-ELECT WADSWORTH

**James Wolcott Wadsworth, Jr., Selected at Age of 37 to Fill Elihu Root's Chair, Is a Fighter and a Farmer With Fine Record**

JAMES WOLCOTT WADSWORTH, Jr., selected by popular vote as the new Senator from New York, comes of a family distinguished in the public service. Yet none of his forebears achieved such distinction as a Senatorship from the Empire State at the age of 37. Having it in the family this tradition of public service may possibly have given him an early start.

While it is natural to turn to English families for practical illustrations of this tradition of public service it is not necessary to go abroad for a parallel to the Wadsworth fortunes. There were Martin Van Buren, also a New Yorker, and his son "Prince John," and there are other families of this State—the Livingstons, the Beekmans and others whose roots go back to Colonial history—which have furnished several successive generations of men to fill important offices in State and nation. Mr. Wadsworth's election to the United States Senate makes him decidedly the most promising of the four generations of Wadsworths that have figured in unbroken succession in the public life of New York State.

The family is one of the oldest in the country and one of the biggest landholders in this State. The deeds of the Wadsworths for their possessions in Genesee Valley date back to original grants by the English Crown.

The first of the family in this State was James Wadsworth, known as the "American philanthropist," who moved to Genesee from Durham, Conn. He was a Yale graduate of 1787. James Wadsworth had acquired immense tracts of land at the time of his death in 1844. He printed and circulated at his own expense many publications on the subject of education and offered bounties to the towns that first established libraries. He secured the first school library law, founded and endowed the Genesee Library and in deed-ling land always stipulated that 125 acres in each new township should be free for a church and 125 acres free for a school.

The "American philanthropist's" son, James Samuel, helped to found the new Republican party in New York State. He was an elector-at-large on the Fremont ticket in 1856 and four years later was a Presidential Elector on the Lincoln ticket. James Samuel Wadsworth was military Governor of the District of Columbia in the civil war and in 1862 was the Republican candidate for Governor of New York. Serving as an officer in the Union army, he was killed at the battle of the Wilderness, where he commanded a division.

James Wolcott Wadsworth, his son, and father of the new United States Senator, was about to enter Yale in 1864, but abandoned the idea of college to join the Union army in the field at the age of 18. He served until the end of the war. He was twice a New York Assemblyman, was State Comptroller in 1879 and was elected to Congress in 1881 and served until 1885 and again from 1891 to 1907.

James W. Wadsworth, Jr., was born at Genesee on August 12, 1877. His mother was Louise Travers, daughter of William R. Travers of New York. He was prepared for Yale at St. Mark's School in South Brough, Mass., and entered college in the fall of 1894, being graduated with the class of 1898.

He was fond of all outdoor sports at school and college. Baseball was the thing he liked most and played best, and in his last two years at Yale he was on the varsity nine. He played baseball all summer each year on a team organized in Genesee by his father—to whom Yale gave an honorary A. M. the year it graduated his son, and the aggregation of athletes became known all over the Eastern States for its assembling of star players from the various college teams. Ask a Yale man of the late '90s who Wadsworth is and he will probably tell you that Jimmie was the best first baseman that ever played on a Yale varsity nine and one of the most popular men in his class.

"Not a scholar," ran the general verdict, "in the sense of high standing, but a man who knew every member of his class, a man who could make a good speech offhand and a splendid organizer. Wadsworth was only a fair student, but he would rather play baseball than eat."

Mr. Wadsworth's chums at Yale included Payne Whitney and Adelbert Hay, son of Secretary of State John Hay. Mr. Whitney and Mr. Wadsworth afterward married Mr. Hay's two sisters. Mrs. James W. Wadsworth, Jr., was Miss Alice Hay, and there are two children, a boy and a girl. They were married in 1902.

But to finish with Mr. Wadsworth at college: He was tapped for Skull and Bones at the end of his junior year, and



James Wolcott  
Wadsworth, Jr.

that meant being one of fifteen chosen out of 1,200. He belonged to the Glee Club, Delta Cappa Epsilon, the Renaissance and Kipling clubs. Among his classmates were Magistrate Frederick Kernochan, Frank A. Lord and Robert J. Turnbull, Jr.

Mr. Wadsworth got out of Yale just as the Spanish war got well under way. He enlisted as a private in Battery A, Pennsylvania Light Artillery, which was a part of Gen. Frederick Grant's brigade in the short campaign in Porto Rico.

After the Cuban campaign Corporal Wadsworth was discharged, but early in the next year, none too pleased at having missed the real fighting so far, he went out to the Philippines while the Filipino war was on. With him were three classmates, and the party made a tour of the islands. They did not enlist; instead their explorations broadened out into a journey round the world, which occupied a year.

After that Mr. Wadsworth came home and settled down on the farm.

He has it in his head, as all of his family have had it before him, that the first duty of a farmer is to be a farmer and make his farm pay. A certain amount of strict attention to business is necessary to make even so fertile a property as the Wadsworths' show a profit. Therefore when a friend of his own age told him that he plugged too hard and didn't have enough time for fox hunting and other diversions of the country gentleman he merely looked up and said:

"Why, man, I've got to work to make these farms pay, and if they don't pay I'll go broke!"

To any one who has seen the farms the idea of their owner ever "going broke" sounds perhaps a little absurd. There are many thousands of acres in the family's possession. Austin Wadsworth, master of bounds of the Genesee Valley Hunt and a cousin of the new Senator, is said to own the largest area of cultivated farm land ever held in New York State.

The 35,000 acres making up the fam-

ily's possessions—that's over fifty square miles—are held by W. Austin Wadsworth, Herbert Wadsworth, Mrs. Charles Wadsworth, Mrs. Porter Chandler, J. S. Wadsworth, Craig Wadsworth (who was a Rough Rider—Col. Roosevelt, who used to admire young J. W. Wadsworth immensely, couldn't make room for him in his regiment), and James W. Wadsworth and James W. Wadsworth, Jr.

For convenience this holding is divided up into farms ranging from 90 to 2,000 acres each. A family lives on each farm.

Those who work the J. W. Wadsworth farms receive monthly wages as well as housing and farm produce to the extent of their needs. These tenants are therefore considered more responsible to the proprietors than the others, though all the Wadsworth farms are run on a strict business basis. Each farm must be made to pay and each is made to pay. The collection of farms supports about 2,000 persons. Except for the leasehold system all the farms are run on the same general plan. For

convenience they have names—pretty ones too, such as Sweet Briar Farm, Sugar Bush Farm, Black Walnut Farm, and so on.

Mr. Wadsworth, bred from his youth to a performance of farm tasks, took to this life with ease and affection. He once said that he was not only a farmer but intended to remain a farmer all his life. He likes it.

You see he manages several hundred acres at Mount Morris all by himself; in addition he and his father manage not only their joint properties but the properties of several other members of the family. Austin Wadsworth tending to his own and the remaining properties. The Wadsworths employ bookkeepers and keep records as full and careful as those in any business; they know not only the money spent and the profit earned on each farm but on each field, and their records go back for over a hundred years. They possess full figures of their plantings for a century, know just what they planted each year, what they reaped, what they made,

**Four Generations of His Family, One of Oldest in Country, Have Figured in Unbroken Succession in Public Service of This State**

what fertilizer they used, the condition of the soil, what money was spent for repairs and when, and so they can tell pretty nearly the possibilities of their land and the crops raised on it.

Young J. W. Wadsworth says that if you have a fair grade of soil, proper knowledge of how to work it, do the necessary hard work and expend the same pains and business care that you would in any other occupation farming ought to pay you 5 per cent. on your capital year in and year out. And he believes that is a decent return because, he says, you have had your home rent free, and your living for the most part, have been free from shop rent, grocer bills and the endless little pocket drains, so that most of the actual cash in hand has been clear gain.

There is something fascinating about Mr. Wadsworth—to one seems able to say just what it is; it is apparently a blend of qualities. It was potent enough to win the exuberant support of President Roosevelt when Gov. Higgins decided in 1905 that he wanted Mr. Wadsworth as Speaker of the New York Assembly. Wadsworth was then serving his first year in the Assembly. He became Speaker at the age of 28.

Clean cut, straightforward, honest, well educated, with a mighty pleasant voice and charming manners, young Wadsworth was and is well calculated to inspire genuine affection among those close to him and popular liking and enthusiasm among the voters of a whole State.

How did he come to get the Speakership with a rush? It was really an exceptional situation that brought him into it. Gov. Higgins found a legislative housecleaning necessary and required a man entirely unconnected with political tangles at Albany to do it. He finally hit upon Wadsworth, who was young, clean, freshly come to the capital and of a vigorous and pleasing personality, with family, an excellent personal record outside politics and the approval of President Roosevelt to back him.

For years a small clique had controlled, mainly through the Committee on Rules, all the important legislation that came before the Assembly. Toward the close of the legislative session every bill was committed to the care of this committee and its will practically decided the fate of any measure, regardless of its merits.

Now this committee, like all others, was appointed by the Speaker; therefore to clean out this legislative pig-sty Gov. Higgins had to get a Speaker untrammelled with political alliances. He got his man in Wadsworth, who had the courage to name a new committee and leave out of it such warhorses as James T. Rogers of Broome and Louis Bedell, Odell's Assemblyman. As a result the end of that winter's legislative session was compassed without any of the usual scandal centering around the Rules Committee of the Assembly.

The best thing was that Speaker Wadsworth's housecleaning didn't stop with the Rules Committee, but extended to most of the committees of the Assembly. He lifted the Legislature out of a rut—and a pretty bad rut at that—and did much to end graft at Albany.

He kept the Speakership until 1910 and then quit politics for the time being. He had found himself in a position of tacit opposition to Gov. Hughes, and it had hurt him. He did not come out and openly attack Hughes, as did William Barnes, George Aldridge of Rochester and some of the bosses, but after letting some insurance reform bills through the Assembly it became evident that Speaker Wadsworth's views on new legislation didn't go far enough to suit the Hughes programme. Gov. Hughes was mighty popular then and Mr. Wadsworth was reelected with a reduced majority. The next time, reasonably sure that he could not retain the Speakership if reelected, he got out of politics altogether; but, as has been said, only for the time being.

Mr. Wadsworth is not a reformer—just a regular Republican who believes in organization methods, but believes also in honesty above and beyond everything else. He opposed direct primaries because, he said, experience showed that the rich man had an absolutely unfair advantage in his candidacy under the system of direct nominations.

He has long favored a short ballot, biennial sessions of the Legislature, four year term for Governor and two year terms for Assemblymen, and he has an "instinctive horror of reformers" and believes that political machines can't be permanently scrapped, and that bosses may be made, whipped and deposed, but can't be eliminated. In other words, he is a good Republican who does not believe that there exist any magic remedies that will solve at a stroke all political puzzles and end all political ills.

He is young, good looking, well trained, honest, courageous and has winning ways. He has a clean record as a college man, sportsman, farmer, legislator, soldier and Speaker of Assembly. He has wealth, a fine family tradition, social position and great popularity and the affectionate liking of those who work for him and those who vote for him. He is to sit in Elihu Root's chair. Was ever a man more fortunately placed at 37?